

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to continue for a full 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am down here on the floor of the Senate this morning, almost this afternoon, to talk about the celebration that is going to take place here at the Capitol by the Republicans on the House side, based on the 100 days after their so-called contract for America.

They are bringing the circus to town for this celebration. In one way, I think it is appropriate that they bring the circus to town because, as I watch the proceedings, part of my heart is still in the House of Representatives. I served their proudly for 10 years. It has been pandemonium over there, in one Senator's view; a barrage of activity into the wee hours of the morning. And, in my view, in many of these areas they have just gone too far, too fast, too sloppily. I think proof of that is the fact that the Senate has slowed down their momentum and I believe we will continue to do this as reasonable people in this body, regardless of party, look at their activity, think about their activity, review their decisions, and come up with more reasonable legislation.

An example of that, they sent over a moratorium bill which would have stopped regulations—all kinds of important safety regulations, for example—from going into effect. And this Senate never even took it up. They put forward a very sensible approach to regulations. That is just one example of how the Senate is slowing down the contract for America.

So in one way it is appropriate that the circus is coming to town. But on another level it is inappropriate because who loves the circus the most? Kids. And who gets hurt the most by the contract? Kids.

So, in some ways, to me, there is a real irony in bringing the circus to town and the kids to the circus to celebrate the contract which hurts the kids—perhaps more than any other group, although many of us get hurt by this contract.

Why do I say it is the kids had who get hurt? This is not rhetoric. This is not overstatement. This is fact.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the cuts just in these rescission bills that are asked for, by the Republicans, that cut out kids, that hurt kids.

I ask unanimous consent to have this document printed in the RECORD at this time.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT ON S. 617, SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND RESCISSIONS—IMPACT ON CALIFORNIA

(By Senator Barbara Boxer)

S. 617 as reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee is a classic Hobson's Choice for California. My state stands in line at the livery stable, waiting for a horse to hire. When she gets to the stable door, the man in charge says "take this one or none". The problem is, the horse offered is a dangerous and destructive outlaw, one that's sure to throw her. So what does she do? Take the one offered so that she can get where she's going? Or reject it and walk? Mr. President, I conclude that California should reject this nag and take a walk.

The amendment offered by the Senator from Maryland, Senator Mikulski, is a far better alternative, and I am happy to have the chance to support it.

Let me explain for the record a few of the most egregious examples of why the bill as reported is a bad deal for my state.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS (CDFI)

The bill would rescind \$124 million of the Fund's \$125 million appropriation for FY 1995.

The CDFI Fund is important to California. More than 20 established CDFIs serve California citizens that otherwise would have no access to lending or financial services.

For example, the Low Income Housing Fund (LIHF), a large CDFI based in San Francisco, works to increase the amount of capital available for the development of affordable housing. The LIHF serves a wide range of financing needs that are not typically met by other lenders, including construction and gap financing and interest rate subsidies.

There are several new California CDFIs that are currently in the process of formation. For example, the Neighborhood Bancorp., a San Diego CDFI, was recently granted a charter from the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and is raising capital from private investors.

The Fund helps these institutions raise the capital they need to provide services to distressed communities in California and across the nation.

The Fund was established last year. It got unanimous approval in the Senate and was passed by a vote of 410-12 in the House.

The Senate bill also rescinds:

\$47 million from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). This program funds general economic development planning and infrastructure. Historically, California receives about 15% of EDA funds, or about \$6 million. Communities use EDA grants to improve economic competitiveness and create jobs.

\$27 million from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Funds would be cut from the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program (MEP), which provides small and medium sized companies with manufacturing assistance. The MEP is based on the highly successful Agriculture Extension program. There are currently MEP centers in Southern California that provide assistance to defense contractors seeking to diversify their businesses. Also, we hope to introduce a MEP in the Bay Area soon.

\$93.5 million from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Account for 1993. This program funds closure related expenses for bases scheduled for closure in 1993. In California, such bases include the Alameda Naval Complex and the Mare Island Shipyard. The BRAC account funds environmental cleanup costs, moving costs, and new construction costs at bases receiving workload. The exact impact of this rescission is impossible to de-

termine, but it is reasonable to worry that this rescission could delay the closing of California military bases.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Committee bill would cut \$1.2 billion from water cleanup infrastructure funding. \$799 million of this cut would come from grant money to the States to help them establish revolving loan funds to finance drinking water improvements. This funding would be available to the states once Congress authorizes such state funds in a new Safe Drinking Water Act. The remaining \$433 million would come from funds set aside for specific projects.

California's share of the drinking water fund under the current allocation formula would be \$57 million. Specific California projects that would lose their FY95 funding include City of LA (\$50 million), Mojave Water Agency (\$10 million), Lake County (\$2 million). California communities whose projects would be spared include San Diego, San Francisco, County of LA, Tijuana, and border cleanup near the New River.

The Committee bill would cut \$100 million from the Superfund program. This cut would significantly slow cleanups at many of California's 96 Superfund sites, including the 18 closing and operational military bases on the Superfund list.

AGRICULTURE

The Committee bill would cut \$1.5 million from a new USDA salinity research lab at the University of California at Riverside. This lab is designed to grapple with salinity and other runoff problems endemic to the kind of irrigated agriculture that dominates California agriculture. Such a funding cut would prevent the installation of the new labs equipment.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee bill would cut \$3 million from the Fish & Wildlife Service, effectively barring new listings of animal and plant species as "endangered" or "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.

Timber Rider: An amendment attached to the bill would require the Forest Service (under USDA) and the Bureau of Land Management (under the DoI) to sharply increase "salvage logging" in western forests. Unlike the House version of this language, the Committee bill would not require a particular cut level. It would, however, effectively waive several important environmental safeguards.

Forest health is a problem in California and throughout the west, but this extreme approach threatens both forest ecology and cooperative efforts like the Quincy Library Group.

ENERGY

The Committee bill would cut \$48 million from the Department of Energy's programs to boost energy efficiency. DoE cannot give a precise breakdown of how much of this funding California would lose, but the amount would be significant because of California's leadership position on the development and use of these technologies.

This includes a proposed \$10 million cut from the program used by federal agencies to weatherize low income homes—a cut that will mean about 240 fewer weatherized homes under this program in California.

This also includes a \$5 million cut from the Clean Cities Program which supports the purchase of clean vehicles by federal agencies to match such purchases by cities. The California cities affected by this lost funding include, Fresno, Sacramento, San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland, and Long Beach.

The Committee bill would cut \$35 million from solar and renewable energy research

and commercialization programs. DOE cannot give a precise breakdown of how much of this funding California would lose, but the amount would be significant because of California's leadership position on the development and use of these technologies.

EDUCATION

\$55.8 million would be rescinded from grants for state reform initiatives under the Goals 2000 law. California would lose over \$6 million in federal funds which were to be used for innovative programs emphasizing math and reading.

\$72.5 million in Title I funds for educating disadvantaged children. Title I funds are distributed by formula according to the number of poor children in a school district. California would lose \$8.7 million in federal funds, affecting services to approximately 8,500 California students.

\$100 million for the Safe and Drug Free Schools program for drug prevention and safety measures. California would lose \$10 million. 97% of all school districts in California benefit from this program.

\$69 million for teacher training under the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, which has a special emphasis on training in the areas of math and science. California would lose \$7.6 million in funds.

\$5 million for education technology programs to bring more computers to the classroom and help schools purchase software. California ranks 50th in the nation on the number of schools with computers in the classroom. California loses \$500,000 in funds.

CHILDREN

\$42 million for Head Start, a comprehensive preschool program for low-income children that combines learning with social services and parental involvement. Approximately 9,000 children nationwide would lose services.

\$8.4 million for the Child Care and Development Block Grant which provides funding to states to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care. California would lose approximately \$840,000 and 240 California families would not get child care.

In San Diego County alone there are 11,633 families eligible for child care assistance under the block grant, but only funding for 1,646 children. The odds of getting off the child care waiting list are 1 in 14.

\$35 million for WIC which provides nutrition counseling and food packages to pregnant and post partum women and young children through age 4. This cut won't remove any women and children from the rolls, but it will impede the expansion of the program. California would lose \$6.7 million in funds and would be unable to expand the program to serve an additional 20,000 women and children.

NATIONAL SERVICE

\$210 million for national service programs, the largest of which is AmeriCorps. Federal funds go directly to the states to support locally designed and operated programs addressing unmet needs in the areas of education, public safety, health, housing and the environment.

AmeriCorps members serve roughly 1,700 hours full-time over a year and receive an education award worth \$4,725 which may be used to pay for current or future college and graduate school tuition, job training, or to repay existing student loans.

A cut of this size would severely impact the AmeriCorps program by eliminating over 2,000 slots nationwide. In California alone there are 2500 AmeriCorps members serving in approximately 18 programs throughout the state.

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Rental assistance

The Senate bill would rescind \$2.4 billion from incremental Section 8 vouchers and certificates. California would receive a rescission of approximately \$300 million—denying approximately 6,000 low-income families in the state housing assistance. Many of these families have been on wait lists for years.

The money rescinded was to be used for incremental increases in housing vouchers and certificates—nationally, 62,000 new households would have been able to get housing with this funding. HUD had set aside 12,000 certificates for women with children who are homeless—the fastest growing part of the homeless population. An additional 3,000 certificates (nationally) were to be used for housing assistance for homeless people suffering from the AIDS virus.

Public housing modernization

The Senate would rescind \$835 million for public housing modernization. HUD estimates that Public Housing Authorities in California would lose \$37.9 million under the rescission. Without the modernization money Public Housing authorities would be unable to upgrade below-standard housing.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

State legalization impact assistance grants (SLIAG)

\$6 million would be rescinded under the Senate bill—no similar rescission was made in the House bill. It is estimated that California would likely receive at least 40 percent of the money. The money would be used to promote naturalization and citizenship for the immigrants legalized under IRCA, by providing for civics and English education.

Immigrant education

Immigrant education programs would be cut by \$11 million nationally. No similar rescission was made in the House bill. California would receive \$4.4 million of this amount. The money is used to provide assistance to local educational agencies that have large numbers of recently arrived immigrant children—this includes legal and illegal immigrant children. States like California are the large beneficiaries of the program because of the large influx of immigrant populations. No "head counting" of children is required for the local educational agency to receive funding. In a sense, this program is a reimbursement to states to help offset the cost of providing education to illegal immigrant children since no distinction is made between them and legal immigrant children.

JOBS

The Senate makes bigger cuts in Job Corps than the House, eliminating 12 new centers, including those planned in San Francisco and Long Beach.

The Senate bill does not rescind money for the 1995 summer youth jobs, but does eliminate \$871.5 million for 1996 summer youth jobs. California is due to receive \$147 million for next summer.

Both House and Senate bills eliminate the Youth Fair Chance program, which provides grants for education and job training to poor youth in communities with high poverty. Los Angeles was due to receive \$2 million and Fresno \$1 million under the \$24.8 million program nationwide.

Both House and Senate bills cut adult job training programs by \$33 million of which \$5.5 million would be rescinded from California programs.

The Senate bill rescinds \$472 million from the year-round program for youth job training, higher than the House rescission of \$310 million. Based on the impact to California from the House level (\$53 million), the im-

pact to the state from the higher Senate level would be about \$80 million.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The bill cuts \$1.3 billion in airport improvement funds, which are used for runway construction, signals and other airport improvements. The funds are fully discretionary so no specific California project is targeted. However, California received about 8.7 percent in FY93. Applying that proportion for FY95 would mean \$113 million less for California.

Although the Senate bill eliminates fewer California transit projects than the House bill, it would still take \$1.9 million from San Diego commuter rail, \$8 million from San Jose commuter rail and \$1.76 million for the Vallejo Ferry.

The Senate bill rescinds \$2 million from the Vessel Traffic System, an updated traffic control system that would be installed in San Francisco and Los Angeles-Long Beach. A \$4 million Coast Guard support center at the LA-Long Beach ports complex is also rescinded.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The Senate bill increases the amount rescinded for Corps of Engineers construction from \$40 million to \$50 million. No state breakdown is available but this is a major account for California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, let us look at some of them. Head Start? I thought we had a national consensus in this country that Head Start works. I thought we had a bipartisan agreement that investing in our children at a young and tender age to get them on the right road to learning worked.

Well, they cut Head Start. They cut the Women, Infants, and Children Program. As a matter of fact, they basically end the program. What did this program do? It gave nutrition to pregnant women who could not get that nutrition.

I said on the floor yesterday, I am so proud I am going to become a grandmother for the first time.

I call my daughter every day. "Did you take your vitamins? Are you eating well? Are you gaining weight? Are you taking care of yourself?" She has the best care because she is fortunate to have insurance.

What about the other pregnant women? They are bringing children into this world, into America. Do we not want them to be strong to avoid having to be in an incubator, to avoid having to have learning disabilities because they did not have prenatal care? I thought we had a consensus, a bipartisan lead, on that question. But no. They actually end the WIC Program as a national program, and they will let the States decide how they are going to do this. And by the way, competitive bidding goes out the window. It is a giveaway to the largest infant formula companies—the winners in that one.

Drug free schools? I thought we had consensus on drug free schools. The police come in and they work in the Dare Program and teach the kids to say no to drugs. They cut that. They are proud of that. They are bringing the circus to town to celebrate that they are cutting drug free schools.

School-to-Work Program—getting kids ready to go to work, those who do not go off to college. They cut that. They cut AmeriCorps. They kill the AmeriCorps Program. What is it? National youth service. I thought we had bipartisan consensus here in the Senate when we voted for AmeriCorps. Our young people go into the community. I have met these AmeriCorps volunteers. They work with the children. They work with the elderly. I even got a letter from the Red Cross saying, "Please don't cut the AmeriCorps program." I am forwarding that to the majority leader because I know he likes the Red Cross. They use AmeriCorps volunteers. But they are going to eliminate AmeriCorps.

Summer youth jobs—jobs to teach our young people how important it is to be responsible. They cut that. They even want to do away with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting where our little kids could get quality programming like "Sesame Street", and "Barney", and the others, and zero out the National Endowment for the Arts that teaches those kids the arts, ballet, and music instruction. They are bringing the circus to town to celebrate their attack on the kids.

Do you know what the cruelest one of all is, throwing hundreds of thousands of disabled kids right off the roll, kids that would bring tears to your eyes. But they are bringing the circus to town.

Who is benefiting from all of these cuts?

I went to one school lunch program. A little kid came up to me. I will never forget it as long as I live. She said "Senator, when they cut my school lunch program, where is the money going that they are saving?" What a smart kid. What a smart kid. That is the question all of America should ask.

Where is the money going when you cut these programs? I have the answer. It is being voted on, as we speak, in the House. Do you know what the answer is? It is tax breaks for the wealthiest people in America. Hurt the kids, help the rich. That is the Republican contract. I will show you the chart. More than 50 percent of their tax cut goes to people over \$100,000. A third of the tax cut goes to those earning over \$200,000 a year. Who gets hurt? The kids, the middle class, the poor, Robin Hood in reverse, my friend.

How about the billionaire tax loophole? I have to tell you about this one. The Senate voted to eliminate a tax loophole that went like this. If you are a millionaire or a billionaire under the current Tax Code you can take all the money you earned and all the assets you have that you earned in America, you can renounce your citizenship, give up your citizenship as a citizen of the United States of America, get out of town and not pay a tax—tax dodgers who are millionaires, billionaires, and trillionaires. Those folks ought to go to the circus. They have a lot to celebrate—not the kids. But I do not think

they are going to come out because they do not want anyone to know about this contract. It is not in their best interest. It is unbelievable to me that people would celebrate such a program.

Let us talk about some of the other winners and losers. How about the so-called legal reform? You know about the doctor who cut off the wrong leg of a patient? You read about that. You know about corporations?

You know about corporations that produce dangerous products like silicon breast implants, the Dalkon shield, intrauterine devices that make women sterile. Devices that hurt women, maim them, kill them. Well, under the so-called Reform Act, we cap the punitive damages on those corporations, so there will no longer be a deterrent out there to stop this.

How about the other legal reform? You all know about Charles Keating, how he called the senior citizens in and sold them a bill of goods. They thought their investments were secure. They thought their investments were federally insured. They were not, and they lost everything.

Well, under the so-called Legal Reform Act, by the Republicans, the victims of Charles Keating could never even get into the courtroom. Fortunately, for them, when Charles Keating stole their life savings, the Democrats were in charge of the Congress and we allowed them in the courtroom, and they collected. But now, under this contract, if you are a small investor, you can forget it. Your rights, if this Republican bill goes forward, will have been trampled. I think we will stop it in the Senate, but that is what they are celebrating over there, with the circus.

Corporate polluters are celebrating, too, because in that contract there is hidden language about a moratorium on regulations that will make our water safe and our air clean. We have had people die of a bacteria called cryptosporidium that got into the water supply. We have rules to control the water supply so no one else will die from that bacteria. Those controls would be stopped by the Republican contract, and they could keep on with these practices.

You know about the kids who ate hamburger meat and died from E. coli bacteria. There are rules to stop that. And the Republican contract says forget about those rules; let us have a moratorium.

So who wins? The polluters. Who loses? The people. And the Republicans are celebrating with the circus.

How about the flying public? We fly a lot here in airplanes. That moratorium over there in the contract would stop the FAA from issuing safety regulations.

We know that the safety of certain commuter airlines must be improved. There are several rules that have been proposed to bring them up to the standards of the larger planes, and in

the Republican contract and what passed in the House, those rules would be stopped.

Let me tell you what else would be stopped:

Inspection and repair of landing gear brakes for certain Airbus aircraft.

Airbus is an aircraft that is made in France. This rule was prompted by an accident in which an aircraft was unable to stop on a wet runway. The proposed regulation would ensure the safety of these aircraft, but the Republicans want it stopped. Who is the winner if that regulation is blocked? Airbus. Who is the loser? Any of us who get on those planes.

How about this regulation that would have been stopped:

Replacement of certain bolts, nuts, washers that hold together parts of the wing flap.

They are celebrating with the circus while they want to stop these kinds of regulations.

Here is a good one. You do not have to have a degree in engineering to understand this one:

Requiring measures to prevent the sliding cockpit side windows from rupturing in certain Airbus models. Failure to prevent the sliding cockpit side windows from rupture can potentially result in rapid decompression of the aircraft.

"Rapid decompression of the aircraft." Do you want to be on an aircraft when that happens? The Republicans are celebrating with a circus, while they try to stop those kinds of safety regulations.

Who loses there? The flying public. Anyone who goes in an aircraft. Who wins? Irresponsible companies that do not take care of their products.

I could go on, Mr. President, about the winners and losers in this contract. Deficit reduction surely is a loser, if they go ahead with this tax break. It is going to cost \$680 billion over 10 years to the Federal treasury. I thought we had a bipartisan consensus for deficit reduction. It was a most important thing, but who are they are going to give that tax break to? The richest among us. Loser? The deficit reduction effort. Loser? The children.

The contract does not stop there. I thought we had a bipartisan consensus last year to put cops on the street. I thought we all agreed to put cops on the beat in the community; it was the cornerstone of the crime bill. But in the contract the Republicans want to slash all that, put it in a block grant, and let someone else decide. Who loses when there are fewer cops on the street? You and I, members of the community, the neighborhoods.

And while they are at it, they want to repeal the ban on assault weapons. How is that one? They want assault weapons back on the streets. Who loses? Only God knows who will be the next victim. My son lost his best friend at 101 California Street, an attorney with promise, a young man, married, hoping to have a family, shot down by a crazed gunman who went in and got

an assault weapon and shot eight people and killed my son's best friend John Scully. On that day, I swore to ban these weapons. Now we have to have the fight all over again, a fight that we thought was over, a divisive, difficult fight. And they are celebrating with the circus. I do not understand it.

Who else loses with the contract? Have you ever heard of the gag rule? That is another fight we already had—the gag rule. A poor woman goes into a family planning clinic and cannot be told her options if she is pregnant, cannot be told her options, cannot be told that she has a right to choose in this country. We fought that fight, and President Clinton lifted the gag rule. He said he thought women should have all the facts known and they should make their own choice. It is up to them to decide. It is a difficult choice, but a woman should be able to make that decision. They are celebrating over there. In their contract, they are bringing back the gag rule, treating women like second-class citizens, as if we do not know what could hurt us.

So it is very clear who the winners and who the losers are. The winners? The very wealthy who get tax breaks, the corporate polluters, the big infant formula companies, the criminals, those who oppose the right to choose. They win in this contract. Really, the billionaires who will walk out and renounce their citizenship to get a tax break are the big winners because we ended that tax break. And what happened in the Republican conference committee? They took that out. Who else wins? The broker-dealers who cheat, who do not take their fiduciary responsibility to their clients seriously.

Those consumers, those investors will have a court system that probably does not let them in the front door.

I believe in a system where David can meet Goliath in the courtroom and let the system work.

They believe in a system where David cannot get in the door. They have something in that contract called "loser pays." It is an English system. It is not the American system. It says if you go into court and you lose, you pay the other guy's attorney's fees. How many of us as small investors would take that chance?

We are going to stop that here in the Senate, but it is in the contract. And the Republicans are celebrating with the circus.

So I hope, in this brief time, I have expressed clearly who the winners are and who the losers are. I can add to the losers the senior citizens, who will see Medicare cuts, huge Medicare cuts. And senior housing cuts.

We could not even get our Republican colleagues to protect Social Security when we took up the balanced budget amendment. We said, "Take Social Security out of that and protect it." We could not get a vote. We lost it on a party-line vote.

So while the celebration is going on there with the circus, I just hope the American people will ask a question like that little girl asked me in school: "Senator, what happens if you cut my school lunch? Who gets that money?"

I ask the American people to ask the question: Who benefits from this contract? And read the fine print, because they are not going to show it to you. You are going to have to work to find it out.

I hope that I have been of help in making the point that overall, this contract is not helpful to the American people.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

[Disturbance in the galleries.]

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The galleries will restrain.

Mrs. BOXER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WAS CONGRESS IRRESPONSIBLE?

THE VOTERS HAVE SAID YES

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, anyone even remotely familiar with the U.S. Constitution knows that no President can spend a dime of Federal tax money that has not first been authorized and appropriated by Congress—both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

So when you hear a politician or an editor or a commentator declare that "Reagan ran up the Federal debt" or that "Bush ran it up," bear in mind that the Founding Fathers, two centuries before the Reagan and Bush presidencies, made it very clear that it is the constitutional duty of Congress to control Federal spending, though Congress has failed to do so for the past 50 years.

The fiscal irresponsibility of Congress has created a Federal debt which stood at \$4,876,206,792,345.50 as of the close of business Tuesday, April 4. This outrageous debt, which will be saddled on the backs of our children and grandchildren, averages out to \$18,510.16 on a per capita basis.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, yesterday, my colleague from South Dakota, Senator PRESSLER, stated on the Senate floor that the administration was working through my office to block consideration of S. 652, the telecommunications bill. This statement was flat out wrong, and while Senator PRESSLER subsequently corrected his statement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the press has reported the inaccuracy. This issue is sufficiently im-

portant that the mistake needs to be pointed out.

I have spoken with the Vice President concerning telecommunications reform legislation. The Vice President stated, as he apparently indicated to Senator PRESSLER, that the administration would like to see the bill improved in a couple of different areas. However, the Vice President did not ask, nor did I offer, to block consideration of the bill.

I am committed to passing a telecommunications reform bill, I am eager to see the benefits of technology and communications services—the so-called information superhighway—extended to all parts of this country, especially rural areas like my own State of South Dakota.

The telecommunications bill is sweeping legislation addressing complex problems, and highly technical subjects. While I have taken no steps to block the bill from coming to the floor, I sympathize with those of my colleagues who desire the opportunity and time to study it. With the Senate schedule set for the balance of the week, and with the time provided by the upcoming Easter recess, Senators will have the chance to evaluate the proposal in detail prior to its coming to the floor.

Again, let me reiterate, I have not sought to block consideration of S. 652. Our ranking member on the Commerce Committee, Senator HOLLINGS, stands ready to proceed. Indeed, as Senator PRESSLER noted, every Democrat on the Commerce Committee voted for the bill at markup.

I believe my intentions in regards to this matter are clear. I simply take this opportunity to reinforce my position that a telecommunications reform bill is among the most important legislation the Senate will consider this year.

THE 14TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHOOTING OF JIM BRADY

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today I would like to tell you a story about criminals and guns. It is about someone—let us call him John Doe because the B-A-T-F says it cannot disclose his identity—who in 1978 was convicted of criminal reckless homicide. He killed another driver while driving drunk. Although, as a convicted felon, John Doe was prohibited by law from buying guns, he purchased a handgun from a gun dealer in December 1993. Then, only 1 month later in January 1994, he purchased another. On both occasions he walked out of the gun store fully armed.

How could he do this? He lied on his forms and no one conducted a background check. A few weeks later John Doe tried to increase his arsenal yet again by purchasing a third handgun. But this last time he was caught—thanks to the background check that is now required under the Brady law.